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How Muslim-Friendly Tourism Attributes Shape Visit Intention in Nature-Based Destination: The Roles of Destination Image and Religiosity

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Abstract: This study investigates whether tourism provisions aligned with Islamic principles shape Muslim travelers' willingness to select a nature-based destination. Visitors' overall perception of the place was positioned as a mediating mechanism, whereas personal religiosity was examined as a boundary condition. The investigation took place at Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, and involved Muslim travelers who had previously visited the site. Using an explanatory quantitative approach, survey responses were obtained from 235 participants selected through purposive criteria. SmartPLS 4 was used to estimate a partial least squares structural equation model. The empirical evidence reveals no significant direct pathway between Muslim-friendly tourism provisions and travelers' future visitation willingness. However, faith-sensitive facilities and services improve visitors' overall evaluation of the location, which subsequently increases their likelihood of choosing it. Indirect-effect testing shows that perceptions of the site connect Muslim-oriented attributes with travel willingness. Moreover, this relationship becomes stronger among individuals with higher religious commitment, confirming religiosity's conditional role. Overall, Muslim travelers appear to respond less to the mere presence of Islamic-oriented facilities than to the favorable impressions generated through them. These findings extend Muslim-oriented tourism literature and offer destination administrators practical considerations for strengthening services, destination management, and public perceptions.

Keyword: Muslim-Friendly Tourism Attributes, Destination Image, Muslim Visit Intention, Religiosity.

INTRODUCTION

The worldwide tourism industry has been increasingly shaped by Muslim travelers, whose destination choices are strongly influenced by the extent to which Islamic principles are accommodated. When choosing a place to visit, they consider more than scenery, access, and leisure amenities. They also assess whether the destination provides facilities that help them fulfill religious obligations. These facilities include halal food, prayer spaces, a supportive Muslim-oriented environment, and services that follow Islamic ethical principles. For this

reason, halal-oriented destination features can create comfort, trust, and positive evaluations among Muslim visitors. (Kamassi, 2021) states that marketing for Muslim travelers needs to integrate Islamic values and ethical concerns to build confidence and favorable impressions. (Wibawa et al., 2023) likewise explain that halal facilities and religiously supportive environments contribute to destination image and influence Muslim tourists' behavioral intentions. These considerations are especially important in destinations that promote nature-based experiences, because religious comfort must be balanced with environmental quality, visitor safety, and the authenticity of the local attraction.

Indonesia possesses considerable potential to develop Islamic-based travel services, supported by its dominant adherents of Islam and rich tourism assets. This sector has also entered the country's strategic policy agenda for strengthening competitiveness in travel and hospitality. Global assessments, such as the Global Muslim Travel Index, reinforce this direction by placing Indonesia among the top-rated Islamic travel markets in the 2024 evaluation (Mastercard-CrescentRating, 2024). A number of provinces have also received attention as key areas for halal tourism advancement, namely Aceh, the Riau region, West Sumatra, Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, East Java, Lombok, and South Sulawesi (Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia, 2019). In parallel, the increase in local travel activity and arrivals from abroad gives further support to the industry. Therefore, tourism sites need to redesign their amenities and service systems so they can meet diverse tourist demands, travel motives, and consumption choices (BPS, 2025). This development also calls for integrated work among government institutions, destination operators, residents, and business actors. Through this approach, Islamic-based tourism can move beyond branding discourse and become visible in concrete support systems experienced directly by tourists

South Sulawesi offers clear prospects for Muslim-oriented tourism because it has a large Muslim community, strong cultural traditions, and a wide range of attractions. Its inclusion among national priority locations for halal tourism development also indicates that the province has strategic relevance in Indonesia's Muslim tourism agenda (Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia, 2019). These conditions show that tourism development in South Sulawesi cannot depend only on natural attraction. It must also provide destination features that match religious considerations, travel expectations, and the preferences of Muslim tourists. Inconsistent service delivery may weaken tourists' confidence because religiously supportive tourism depends on both physical facilities and the reliability of daily management practices.

Maros Regency is a strategic area in South Sulawesi for developing Muslim-oriented tourism. The region is associated with the Maros-Pangkep UNESCO Global Geopark, which is recognized for its karst landscape, geological significance, and cultural value, and includes Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park as part of its mainland area (UNESCO, 2023). Among the region's most prominent natural attractions is Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park, a protected conservation area extending across approximately 43,750 hectares and containing waterfalls, karst caves, endemic plants and animals, and more than 250 butterfly species. This makes it widely known as the "Kingdom of Butterflies" (National Parks Association, 2024). As a nature-based destination, the park can attract Muslim tourists more effectively when its natural appeal is supported by adequate Muslim-oriented facilities and services.

Although Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park has notable tourism appeal, visitor numbers have fluctuated. Records from the Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park Authority show that arrivals reached their peak in 2019, declined in the following years, and had not shown stable recovery by 2025. This pattern indicates that natural resources alone may not be sufficient to maintain willingness to visit. For Muslim tourists, intention can arise from the availability of Muslim-oriented destination features and from the image they form after evaluating the destination. A destination's image is formed through the collective judgments, convictions, and mental associations developed by travelers toward a particular location, whereas visit intention reflects their prospective willingness to select and travel to that

destination. The unstable recovery also suggests that destination managers need to understand which factors convert attraction awareness into real visitation plans, especially among Muslim tourists who evaluate both leisure value and religious suitability.

Previous research indicates that tourism facilities arranged for Muslim visitors can influence how a destination is interpreted and may later guide their travel-related decisions. (Royanow et al., 2024), (Suryawardani et al., 2024), and (Wibawa et al., 2023) noted that access to halal meals, proper prayer areas, and a setting that supports Islamic conduct can improve visitors' overall assessment of a destination. Findings from (Sodawan & Hsu, 2022), along with (Wijaya et al., 2025), also show that positive place perceptions increase the possibility of selecting the location for a later trip. However, (Juliana et al., 2023) reached a different result by showing that tourists' place evaluations were not strongly linked to their future travel plans. This difference in findings indicates the need for further inquiry in varied tourism contexts, especially conservation-based natural attractions. It also suggests that tourist decision patterns can differ according to destination characteristics, since national parks, city hotels, and halal-themed attractions provide different forms of visitor value.

Earlier studies have examined Muslim-friendly tourism attributes, perceived place image, religious commitment, and travel intention. Even so, the empirical logic connecting these constructs still requires further clarification. More specifically, evidence on how perceived place image affects Muslim tourists' future travel behavior remains inconsistent. (Sodawan & Hsu, 2022) and (Wijaya et al., 2025) reported that positive destination perception can increase tourists' willingness to come, whereas (Juliana et al., 2023) stated that such perception failed to produce a significant effect on visitation plans. This inconsistency implies that the strength of perceived place image may depend on destination category and tourist profile. In addition, most existing works have focused on Muslim-friendly tourism in hotels, culinary services, urban destinations, and non-Muslim country contexts. Research on how Muslim-friendly tourism attributes function in nature-based destinations, particularly national parks, remains limited.

To address this research gap, the current research investigates Muslim-friendly tourism attributes at Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park as a protected natural tourism area. Its novelty lies in combining perceived place image as an intervening construct and religious commitment as a conditional construct in explaining Muslim tourists' travel intention. Instead of positioning religious commitment only as a direct predictor of tourist decisions, this research treats it as a personal characteristic that can intensify the influence of Muslim-friendly destination features on visitation willingness. This research adds to Muslim-oriented tourism scholarship by clarifying the process through which destination features are converted into behavioral intention via tourists' assessment of place image. It also offers contextual evidence on Muslim tourist behavior in natural destinations, where religious amenities, ecological quality, place perception, and visitor experience must operate as connected management components. Referring to the Attitude–Behavior–Context Theory, Muslim-friendly tourism attributes function as contextual conditions, perceived place image serves as tourists' evaluative judgment, and travel intention reflects behavioral tendency, while religious commitment explains differences in tourist responses toward similar destination features.

The proposed model can also be interpreted through the Stimulus–Organism–Response perspective. In this model, Muslim-friendly tourism attributes serve as outside triggers experienced by visitors through access to halal culinary options, prayer areas, Muslim-sensitive services, and a destination atmosphere that supports religious practice. Perceived place image represents the internal evaluation stage because it shows how tourists process these attributes and develop a general judgment about the destination. Muslim visit intention then becomes the behavioral response, indicating tourists' willingness to choose the destination for future travel. This reasoning is consistent with (Jacoby, 2002), who emphasizes that consumer behavior

should not be viewed only as a direct reaction to external inputs, since internal organismic processes influence how individuals interpret stimuli and produce responses.

Within this logic, Muslim-friendly tourism attributes are expected to affect visit intention by first shaping tourists' evaluation of Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park. The presence of faith-sensitive facilities and services may therefore become behaviorally meaningful when tourists perceive them as part of a favorable destination image. Religiosity further explains possible differences in tourists' responses, because Muslim visitors with stronger religious commitment may attach greater importance to destination attributes that support Islamic values, including prayer access, halal assurance, cleanliness, and a supportive social environment. Thus, the combination of the Stimulus–Organism–Response perspective and Attitude–Behavior–Context Theory offers a more complete explanation of how destination attributes, internal destination evaluation, and individual religious commitment jointly shape Muslim tourists' intention to visit.

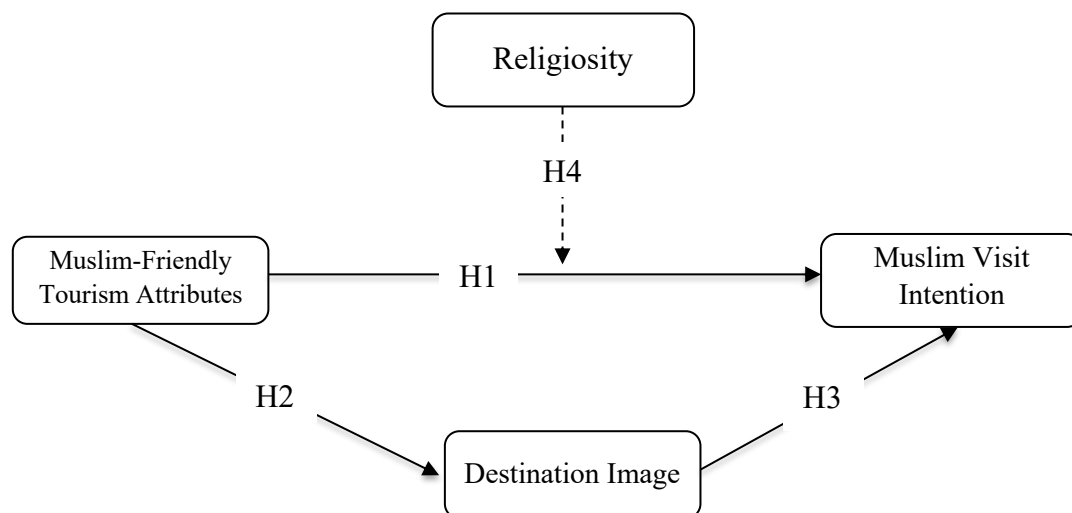


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Building upon the preceding theoretical arguments and empirical evidence, this study investigates how Muslim-friendly destination provisions shape Muslim travelers' willingness to select Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park. Destination image is tested as the mediating construct, while religiosity is analyzed as the moderating construct. Accordingly, the analysis addresses the following questions:

1. How far do halal-oriented destination features shape Muslim tourists' willingness to visit Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park?
2. How do halal-oriented destination features help build destination image at Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park?
3. How does perceived destination image affect Muslim tourists' intention to visit Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park?
4. How do halal-oriented destination features influence Muslim tourists' willingness to visit through destination image at Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park?
5. How does religiosity alter the link between halal-oriented destination features and Muslim tourists' willingness to visit Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park?

METHOD

A causal-explanatory survey approach was adopted to investigate whether tourism provisions compatible with Islamic principles could predict Muslims' propensity to visit. The

proposed framework positioned perceived destination image as an intervening mechanism, whereas religious commitment was incorporated as an interaction variable. The investigation was conducted at Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Survey responses were gathered between March and May 2026 through printed forms and a digital form created in Google Forms. Participation was restricted to Muslim individuals who had previously experienced the attraction. Through this nonexperimental arrangement, relationships among the constructs could be evaluated under actual tourism conditions without manipulating visitors' experiences.

Participants were recruited through criterion-based selection. Eligibility required Islamic religious affiliation and at least one earlier visit to the study site. Sample adequacy was calculated by applying the guideline proposed by (Hair et al., 2019), namely five observations for every manifest item included in a variance-based structural equation model. The research framework contained 27 observed items: ten represented Islamic-compatible tourism provisions, seven captured perceived destination image, six assessed prospective visitation behavior, and four reflected religious commitment. Multiplying the total number of items by five generated a minimum target of 135 participants. After screening the returned forms, 235 usable cases were retained. Consequently, the final dataset surpassed the required threshold and was considered adequate for variance-based SEM estimation.

Information was obtained through a standardized survey whose statements were modified from previously published measurement instruments. Responses were recorded on a five-category agreement continuum, ranging from 1 for complete disagreement to 5 for complete agreement. Four latent concepts were captured by the instrument, namely Islamic-compatible tourism provisions, perceived destination image, prospective visitation behavior among Muslim travelers, and religious commitment.

The hypothesized relationships were estimated through variance-based structural equation modelling using version 4 of the SmartPLS application. This analytical procedure was selected because direct relationships, indirect mechanisms, and interaction effects could be estimated simultaneously. The quality of the latent-variable measurements was inspected by examining indicator convergence, empirical distinctiveness between constructs, and internal consistency. Predictive relationships among the constructs were subsequently evaluated using explained-variance statistics, standardized relationship estimates, and resampling-based significance procedures. Separate examinations were also performed for the indirect pathway operating through perceived destination image and the interaction involving religious commitment. Attitude–Behavior–Context Theory and the Stimulus–Organism–Response perspective were employed as interpretive foundations for understanding Muslim tourists' prospective travel decisions within a nature-based destination setting. The technique was suitable because the framework comprised several unobservable concepts, numerous observed measures, and an interaction component that needed to be estimated within a single analytical system.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The evidence reported in this section was obtained from 235 eligible Muslim participants with previous experience at the selected national park. The presentation begins with the participants' demographic profile, followed by an examination of measurement quality and the predictive relationships contained in the proposed framework. Statistical decisions concerning the proposed relationships are then reported, including the indirect mechanism and interaction effect. The final part connects the numerical evidence with the study objectives and provides a substantive interpretation of the findings.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Age	< 12 years	0	0,0
	13-28 years	134	57,0
	29-44 years	70	29,8
	45-60 years	29	12,3
	61-79 years	2	0,9
	> 80 years	0	0,0
Gender	Male	57	24,3
	Female	178	75,7
Region of Origin	South Sulawesi	224	95,3
	Outside South Sulawesi	11	4,7
	International	0	0,0
Occupation	Student (Undergraduate, Master's, and Doctoral Levels)	102	43,4
	Entrepreneur	68	28,9
	Private Sector Employee	23	9,8
	Civil Servant	20	8,5
	Homemaker	18	7,7
	Others	4	1,7

Source: Data Processed, 2026

Every participant included in the analysis was a Muslim traveler who had previously visited Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park. Individuals between 13 and 28 years old constituted the majority of the sample, totaling 134 respondents or 57.0%. The next largest age category consisted of those aged 29–44 years, accounting for 29.8%, whereas participants between 45 and 60 years represented 12.3%. Women made up 75.7% of the respondents, considerably exceeding the proportion of men at 24.3%. In terms of geographical background, almost all participants originated from South Sulawesi, with a share of 95.3%, while only 4.7% resided outside the province. Students were the most frequently represented occupational group at 43.4%, followed by business owners at 28.9%. Employees in private companies contributed 9.8% of the sample, government employees 8.5%, homemakers 7.7%, and participants from other professions 1.7%. Overall, the respondent composition was characterized primarily by young Muslim women residing in South Sulawesi, with students forming the dominant employment category.

The profile of respondents also indicates several methodological boundaries that must guide the interpretation of this research. Since purposive sampling was applied, the empirical outcomes cannot be extended widely to represent all Muslim tourists across Indonesia. The dominant share of participants from South Sulawesi, shown in Table 1, suggests that the data mainly reflect Muslim visitors who already have local or regional familiarity with Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park. In addition, the higher number of women and students in the sample may shape how respondents judge destination features, comfort, security, and future travel willingness. Thus, the study outcomes need to be interpreted according to the demographic characteristics of the analyzed sample.

Assessment of the Measurement Structure

Prior to testing the proposed linkages, the quality of the research instrument was reviewed through item precision, internal reliability, and conceptual separation among latent constructs. Item contribution to each construct was identified using standardized outer loading scores. Reliability within each construct was assessed through Cronbach's alpha, rho A, rho C, and the extracted variance score from all indicators. Discriminant separation was further checked using HTMT values to confirm that each construct represented a distinct theoretical domain and did not overlap statistically with other constructs.

Table 2. Convergent Validity – Outer Loading

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading
Muslim Friendly Tourism Attributes	X1.1	0.869
	X1.2	0.848
	X1.3	0.838
	X1.4	0.764
	X1.5	0.706
	X1.6	0.859
	X1.7	0.851
	X1.8	0.895
	X1.9	0.854
	X1.10	0.861
Destination Image	Z1.1	0.792
	Z1.2	0.844
	Z1.3	0.827
	Z1.4	0.773
	Z1.5	0.875
	Z1.6	0.858
	Z1.7	0.860
Muslim Visit Intention	Y1.1	0.765
	Y1.2	0.892
	Y1.3	0.847
	Y1.4	0.896
	Y1.5	0.837
	Y1.6	0.858
Religiosity	M1.1	0.780
	M1.2	0.843
	M1.3	0.916
	M1.4	0.831

Source: Data Processed, 2026

Indicator retention was supported by coefficient values ranging from 0.706 to 0.916, all of which surpassed the 0.70 benchmark. Consequently, every measurement item demonstrated an acceptable degree of convergence with its assigned latent variable, and no item needed to be eliminated. Within the MFTA construct, X1.8 provided the largest contribution with a coefficient of 0.895, whereas X1.5 contributed the least with a coefficient of 0.706. For DI, the most representative item was Z1.5, which produced a coefficient of 0.875. Meanwhile, Y1.4 contributed most substantially to MVI at 0.896. Regarding religiosity, M1.3 displayed the greatest contribution, reaching 0.916. Overall, the retained items adequately represented the latent concepts to which they were assigned.

Table 3. Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
DI	0.926	0.927	0.941	0.695
MFTA	0.952	0.954	0.959	0.699
MVI	0.923	0.924	0.940	0.723
Religiosity	0.874	0.928	0.908	0.712

Source: Data Processed, 2026

All four constructs produced α , ρ_A , and ρ_C values above the minimum threshold of 0.70. This result indicates strong internal reliability across the retained observed measures. In addition, the AVE score for each construct exceeded 0.50, showing that every latent construct was able to explain the dominant share of information represented by its observed measures. Taken as a whole, these results confirm that the instruments achieved adequate reliability and convergent validity. Therefore, MFTA, DI, MVI, and religiosity were considered appropriate for the next stage of structural relationship testing.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity – Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	DI	MFTA	MVI	Religiosity	Religiosity x MFTA
DI					
MFTA	0.817				
MVI	0.529	0.423			
Religiosity	0.337	0.329	0.350		
Religiosity x MFTA	0.620	0.482	0.164	0.454	

Source: Data Processed, 2026

Empirical separation among the latent variables was investigated through the HTMT criterion. Every pairwise coefficient remained beneath the specified cut-off of 0.90, providing evidence that excessive overlap did not occur among the concepts. The largest coefficient was recorded for the relationship between MFTA and DI at 0.817. Conversely, the smallest coefficient, amounting to 0.164, involved MVI and the interaction between religiosity and MFTA. These coefficients demonstrate that each latent variable captured a sufficiently distinguishable conceptual domain.

Structural Model Evaluation

Attention was subsequently directed toward the predictive component of the proposed framework to determine its capacity to account for changes in the endogenous variables and to evaluate the proposed relationships. The examination incorporated coefficients of determination, standardized path estimates, direct relationships, indirect mechanisms, and interaction effects.

Table 5. R-Square Results

	R-square	R-square adjusted
DI	0.593	0.591
MVI	0.340	0.329

Source: Data Processed, 2026

The coefficient of determination for destination image reached 0.593. This value shows that MFTA accounted for 59.3% of the variation in DI, while 40.7% was linked to elements outside the proposed analytical model. For MVI, the R-square value was 0.340. This means that MFTA, DI, religiosity, and the interaction term between MFTA and religiosity jointly accounted for 34.0% of the change in prospective visitation behavior. Although the result indicates that the model has acceptable predictive strength, 66.0% of the variation in MVI still remains unaccounted for. This condition implies that Muslim tourists' visit intention may also depend on other determinants not included in the present analysis. Future studies may therefore incorporate additional constructs, including perceived value, destination trust, tourist satisfaction, travel motivation, and online travel reviews, so the understanding of Muslim tourists' intention to visit nature-based destinations becomes broader and analytically stronger.

Table 6. Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics O/STDEV 	P values
DI → MVI	0.576	0.503	0.179	3.225	0.001
MFTA → DI	0.770	0.775	0.120	6.420	0.000
MFTA → MVI	0.009	0.105	0.198	0.048	0.962
Religiosity → MVI	0.285	0.274	0.072	3.962	0.000
Religiosity x MFTA → MVI	0.207	0.184	0.106	1.957	0.050

Source: Data Processed, 2026

The estimated relationship between Muslim-oriented destination attributes and prospective visitation was extremely weak and failed to reach statistical relevance ($\beta = 0.009$; $p = 0.962$). Consequently, empirical evidence was insufficient to accept H1. A contrasting pattern emerged for destination perception: Muslim-responsive attributes strongly improved tourists' assessments of the site ($\beta = 0.770$; $p < 0.001$). Better provision of facilities and services aligned with Islamic needs was therefore associated with a more advantageous overall impression of the park.

Perceived image of the site showed a significant positive effect on future visitation propensity ($\beta = 0.576$; $p = 0.001$). This finding means that a stronger overall impression of Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park made participants more inclined to choose the area for upcoming travel. Religiosity also produced a separate positive contribution to Muslim visit intention ($\beta = 0.285$; $p < 0.001$). In addition, the product term between religiosity and Muslim-friendly attributes met the significance cut-off ($\beta = 0.207$; $p = 0.050$). These results indicate that facilities aligned with Islamic needs have greater predictive power among visitors with higher levels of religious adherence.

Table 7. Specific Indirect Effect

	O	M	STDEV	 O/STDEV 	P values
DI → MVI	0.444	0.380	0.135	3.276	0.001

Source: Data Processed, 2026

Bootstrapping produced an indirect estimate of 0.444, accompanied by a t-statistic of 3.276 and a probability level of 0.001. These figures demonstrate that Muslim-responsive attributes shape prospective travel decisions by first improving tourists' perceptions of the site. Accordingly, destination perception functions as the psychological channel through which religiously accommodating provisions are translated into greater travel propensity. The

facilities themselves are not immediately converted into behavioral willingness; rather, they generate an advantageous evaluation of the park, which subsequently motivates future visitation.

Discussion

The negligible pathway from Muslim-responsive destination attributes to prospective visitation implies that the availability of prayer amenities, halal services, and other faith-sensitive provisions is insufficient by itself to motivate travel to Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park. Because the site primarily offers a nature-based experience, visitors may assign greater importance to scenic appeal, recreational opportunities, ecological conservation, and the overall quality of their journey. This outcome contrasts with the conclusions of (Sodawan & Hsu, 2022) and (Juliana et al., 2023), whose studies reported a meaningful relationship between Muslim-friendly tourism provisions and prospective travel behavior. Differences in attraction type and research setting may account for this discrepancy. Within Bantimurung Bulusaraung, travelers seemingly base their decisions on a comprehensive appraisal of the park rather than solely on the existence of Islamic-oriented amenities. Such facilities become persuasive when they complement the entire tourism experience. Therefore, management should adopt a holistic experience-based approach instead of concentrating narrowly on facility provision.

Despite its negligible immediate contribution to travel propensity, the Muslim-responsive attribute construct substantially improved tourists' evaluations of the park. Worship areas, halal dining availability, considerate services, and an inclusive atmosphere can collectively enhance visitors' impressions. Provisions accommodating Islamic practices communicate managerial awareness of travelers' religious responsibilities, expectations, and personal preferences. This evidence accords with (Suryawardani et al., 2024), (Wibawa et al., 2023), and (Royanow et al., 2024), who emphasized the contribution of Muslim-sensitive tourism provisions to the formation of destination perceptions. Muslim travelers consequently assess a location through both the attractiveness of its core offerings and its capacity to facilitate worship, dietary requirements, and journey convenience. Managers should therefore avoid administering these provisions as disconnected operational components. Prayer facilities, halal-food communication, hygiene standards, directional information, employee conduct, and visitor circulation need to be integrated into a seamless travel experience.

The present evidence also corresponds with (Barkah et al., 2025), who explained that product characteristics initially influence awareness and appraisal before generating behavioral responses. Although their investigation concerned environmentally responsible purchasing, its underlying reasoning is applicable to Muslim-oriented tourism. Faith-sensitive destination provisions initially modify travelers' interpretations and judgments, which later encourage travel consideration. Accordingly, these provisions should not be regarded as optional additions. They constitute essential components capable of cultivating an advantageous perception of the destination.

A statistically dependable upward relationship was identified between tourists' destination evaluations and their future travel propensity. Individuals holding advantageous impressions of the park displayed a greater likelihood of selecting it for a forthcoming journey. A credible and appealing reputation may reassure visitors that the site is capable of delivering experiences compatible with their requirements. This evidence aligns with (Sodawan & Hsu, 2022) and (Wijaya et al., 2025), who positioned destination perception as a major antecedent of Muslim travelers' behavioral decisions. Under the Attitude–Behavior–Context framework, such perception represents an evaluative judgment derived from tourists' interpretation of environmental and service conditions. That judgment subsequently guides prospective behavioral choices. Reputation development must therefore precede the emergence of travel willingness. When the park is viewed as compatible with religious values and journey expectations, the likelihood of future selection rises.

Comparable evidence was reported by (Ardianto & Prasetya, 2025), who observed that advantageous assessments of environmentally responsible hotels increased prospective patronage. Although their context involved green accommodation, their conclusion reinforces the proposition that travelers' behavioral choices originate from subjective interpretations of tourism and hospitality offerings. At Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park, an advantageous reputation can assure Muslim travelers that the available experience corresponds with both their recreational expectations and faith-related requirements.

The indirect analysis positions destination perception as the mechanism carrying the influence of Muslim-responsive attributes toward future travel propensity. Rather than moving immediately from service provision to behavioral willingness, the relationship unfolds through tourists' overall appraisal of the park. Islamic-sensitive amenities and services cultivate advantageous interpretations, and these interpretations subsequently encourage prospective visitation. This explanation corresponds with (Suryawardani et al., 2024) and (Wibawa et al., 2023), who established that Muslim-oriented provisions initially shape perceptions before affecting tourist behavior. Destination attributes should consequently be regarded as strategic instruments for influencing how visitors understand and assess a location. This sequence also clarifies why the immediate pathway was negligible while the mediated pathway proved statistically reliable. The provisions acquired behavioral relevance only after travelers incorporated them into a favorable overall judgment of the park.

The mediation mechanism indicates that Islamic-responsive destination features do not directly produce tourists' willingness to travel. Before deciding to revisit or select a destination, potential visitors first process the meaning of the place and evaluate the usefulness of the services available to them. This argument aligns with (Sodawan & Hsu, 2022) and (Wijaya et al., 2025), who explained that positive destination evaluations play an important role in driving later travel decisions. (Suryawardani et al., 2023) also found that attributes designed for Muslim tourists can influence behavioral outcomes through the quality of the tourism experience. In this sense, destination image serves as an internal evaluative channel that connects service availability with tourists' future behavioral orientation. For destination managers, investment in tangible facilities should be supported by clear and convincing communication so visitors can understand these facilities as part of the broader value offered by the park.

The moderation analysis indicates that religious commitment intensifies the effect of Islamic-oriented destination features on Muslim tourists' intention to visit. These destination features include services and facilities that accommodate Muslim travelers' practical and spiritual requirements, such as halal meal options, worship areas, Islam-sensitive service delivery, staff support, sanitation quality, and a socially comfortable setting (Royanow et al., 2024). Visitors with higher religious commitment usually place stronger value on these features because religious belief influences their attitudes, preferences, and travel-related choices (Juliana et al., 2023). For this group, halal culinary assurance, accessible worship spaces, hygienic facilities, and dependable service quality can build confidence that the destination fits Islamic norms. As a result, Islamic-oriented destination features have stronger power in directing visitation intention among tourists whose travel decisions are closely tied to religious considerations. Conversely, visitors with lower religious commitment may still appreciate these features, although they may view them as complementary support rather than primary factors in deciding to visit.

This result enriches the discussion of religious commitment in Muslim tourist behavior. It shows that religious commitment does not merely act as an independent predictor of travel intention, but also works as a conditioning element that changes the strength of the effect between Islamic-oriented destination features and Muslim tourists' intention to visit (Juliana et al., 2023). Referring to Attitude–Behavior–Context Theory, behavioral outcomes can be explained through the combined role of personal dispositions and situational factors (Guagnano et al., 1995). In this research, Islamic-oriented destination features represent the situational

factor, religious commitment reflects the personal disposition, and Muslim tourists' intention to visit represents the behavioral outcome. From a managerial standpoint, this finding implies that destination operators need to communicate halal culinary assurance, access to worship areas, hygiene standards, and service reliability more explicitly to attract Muslim tourists who prioritize Islamic conformity in their travel decisions.

Taken together, the empirical evidence resolves the issues formulated at the beginning of the study. Islamic-compatible tourism provisions were not sufficient to independently generate future travel plans among Muslim travelers. Their contribution emerged indirectly by creating a more favorable evaluation of the site, which subsequently encouraged a stronger willingness to select it for future travel. Personal religiosity also intensified the behavioral response produced by those provisions. Accordingly, within the investigated protected area, prospective travel decisions are influenced primarily by visitors' overall assessment of the place and the strength of their religious orientation, rather than solely by the existence of faith-supportive amenities.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that tourism facilities aligned with Islamic principles do not automatically lead Muslim travelers to choose the observed destination. Even so, these facilities remain important because they help create a positive perception of the place, and this perception raises the likelihood of later travel decisions. In this context, place perception serves as the main psychological pathway that connects Islamic-responsive destination features with Muslim tourists' travel willingness. Religious commitment also has a supportive role by amplifying the effect of Islamic-oriented destination features on Muslim tourists' willingness to visit, especially among visitors with stronger levels of religious adherence.

The results indicate that travel willingness in a nature-based destination emerges from the combined role of supportive facilities, tourists' overall evaluation of the destination, and individual religious commitment. Therefore, destination managers should avoid concentrating solely on physical amenities, such as prayer areas, halal-related services, and other supporting facilities. These facilities need to be accompanied by transparent guidance, dependable service performance, effective communication, and consistently positive visitor experiences. This coordinated managerial approach is needed because facility provision alone does not necessarily create stronger willingness to visit in the future.

This research contributes to Muslim-oriented tourism literature, particularly in the context of nature-based destinations. The findings show that place perception serves as the key explanatory pathway that links Islamic-responsive destination features with Muslim tourists' travel willingness, while religious commitment explains different responses among Muslim visitors toward the same destination features. Even so, the findings must be interpreted within several limitations. Reliance on purposive sampling, the high concentration of respondents from South Sulawesi, and the dominance of female respondents and students may restrict the broader applicability of the results. In addition, the one-time survey format records tourists' judgments during a single observation period, so it cannot trace changes in perception and travel willingness over time. Future research should involve respondents from more diverse geographical and demographic backgrounds, test the model in different destination settings, and apply longitudinal or comparative designs. Further studies may also expand the proposed model by adding constructs such as after-visit satisfaction, perceived value, destination trust, previous travel experience, and online traveler recommendations to build a broader explanation of Muslim tourists' future travel decisions.

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